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# Davis signs bills tackling state's water, air quality

## Perchlorate groundwater standards set

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LOS ANGELES — Gov. Gray Davis signed legislation Sunday to improve California water and air quality, including protecting the public from risks associated with rocket fuels.

Other new laws encourage the protection of old growth trees and require the production of washing machines that use less water.

One new law, SB1822, calls for limits on the amount of perchlorate allowed in ground water. The toxic chemical is found in rocket fuel, some explosives and fertilizers. It can damage the thyroid gland, which regulates the body's metabolism.

Under the new law, state officials must agree on the limits by January 2003 and begin enforcing them the following year.

No other state has established perchlorate groundwater standards.

The law will also help companies that use perchlorate to know what protective measures they need to take, said the bill's author, state Sen. Byron Sher, D-Palo Alto.

A second law, SB812, creates a forest carbon registry that could one day enable landowners to receive credits for reducing greenhouse gasses.

Under the law, companies and private landowners may voluntarily register forest projects that can be shown to reduce green house gasses such as carbon dioxide.

The law complements another voluntary registry that lets companies register the quantity of their greenhouse gas emissions with state authorities. State officials hope companies will be able to use the registries in the future to show whether they have reduced their emissions.

Sher, who also authored the forestry law, said it will encourage timber companies and forest owners to protect old-growth trees, such as the Sequoias and to replant trees.

Davis signed four other environmental bills into law Sunday, including AB61, which requires the creation of stricter water efficiency standards for residential washing machines by 2004. A similar law exists for commercial washers.

Under SB1808, the Office of Planning and Research is required to report annually on the status of the state's environmental goals and policies. Another law, AB71, revises training procedures for small wastewater facilities. Finally, AB1393 seeks to make water boards more efficient by permitting broader discussions in prehearing conferences.